

STATE OF KANSAS

House Concurrent Resolution No. 5018

By Representative Goico

A Concurrent Resolution honoring native Kansas, Army Chaplain Father Emil Kapaun, Medal of Honor winner.

WHEREAS, On April 11, President Barack Obama will award the Catholic priest, U.S. Army Chaplain and Korean War hero, the late Father Captain Emil J. Kapaun, the Medal of Honor for conspicuous gallantry, the nation's highest military honor; and

WHEREAS, Chaplain Kapaun will receive the Medal of Honor posthumously for his extraordinary heroism while serving with the 3rd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division in combat operations against Chinese communists at Unsan, Korea, and as a prisoner of war from November 2, 1950, until his death on May 23, 1951; and

WHEREAS, When the Chinese viciously attacked his unit at Unsan, Chaplain Kapaun moved fearlessly from foxhole to foxhole under direct enemy fire, providing comfort and first aid to his outnumbered comrades; and

WHEREAS, As the surrounding enemy closed in, U.S. officers ordered an evacuation, but Chaplain Kapaun elected to stay behind with the wounded, fully aware of his certain capture; and

WHEREAS, He repeatedly crawled to the wounded, dragging some to safety and digging shallow trenches for others to shield them from enemy fire; and

WHEREAS, As enemy forces approached the American position and hand-to-hand combat ensued, Father Kapaun noticed a wounded Chinese officer, and he convinced the wounded man to negotiate the safe surrender of the American forces; and

WHEREAS, Following their capture, Father Kapaun and his fellow prisoners marched for several days northward toward prisoner-of-war camps. He refused to take a break from carrying stretchers for the wounded while encouraging others to do their part; and

WHEREAS, Shortly after his capture, Chaplain Kapaun bravely pushed aside an enemy soldier preparing to execute a comrade, thus saving a life and inspiring others; and

WHEREAS, At the prison camp, POWs were forced to live in cabins with no heat, where the water was contaminated and the food was scarce; and

WHEREAS, After dark, Chaplain Kapaun would slip out of his cabin to steal food and medical supplies from the guard's storehouse. Before he went out on these raids, he prayed to St. Dismas, the thief who was crucified with Jesus and repented as he hung dying on the cross – Catholics venerate St. Dismas as the patron saint of reformed thieves; and

WHEREAS, Father Kapaun turned scrap tin into pots so he and his fellow POWs could boil their drinking water, thus reducing the risk of dysentery; and

WHEREAS, He picked [l]ice off sick and dying men who were too weak to care for themselves. He encouraged his fellow POWs not to despair. However, the harsh living conditions in the camp eventually caught up with the heroic priest who died in the camp, suffering from chronic dysentery, pneumonia, and a blood clot in one leg, which had made it almost impossible for him to walk; and

WHEREAS, in 1993, the Catholic Church formally initiated his cause for sainthood and upon approval from the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, Father Kapaun was designated a Servant of God; and

WHEREAS, the Diocese of Wichita and the Archdiocese for the Military Services (AMS) have received reports of miracles involving Father Kapaun, including accounts by some of his fellow prisoners of war; and

WHEREAS, The Diocese of Wichita, is gather information to determine what, if any, miracles can be attributed to Father Kapaun that would indicate that he should be beatified; and

WHEREAS, Father Kapaun is also being considered for possible designation as a martyr for the faith, which would allow him to be beatified without performing a miracle; and

WHEREAS, Chaplain Kapaun was born in 1916 on a farm outside Pilsen, Kansas, in Marion County; and

WHEREAS, Chaplain Kapaun was ordained a Roman Catholic Priest in 1940 and celebrated his first mass at his home parish in Pilsen at St. John Nepomucene Church; and

WHEREAS Chaplain Kapaun also served in the Army Chaplain Corps in World War II; and

WHEREAS Kapaun Mt. Carmel High School in Wichita, Kansas is named in honor of Chaplain Kapaun: Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives of the State of Kanas, and the Senate concurring therein: That Army Chaplain Father Emil J. Kapaun, Medal of Honor winner be recognized for his acts of extraordinary bravery and for his bringing great honor on his home state of KANSAS and all of its people; and

Be it further resolved: That the Secretary of State shall provide an enrolled copy of this resolution to Bishop Michael Jackels, Diocese of Wichita.

I hereby certify that the above Concurrent Resolution originated in the House, and was adopted by that body

May 9, 2013

Ray Merrick
Speaker of the House

Adopted by the Senate May 9, 2013

Susan Wagle
President of the Senate